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Psycho-educational needs at students and the ability of assuming them

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Abstract

Student age (known as extended adolescence), appears as a very demanding life stage because of the gap between society's expectations (the student is viewed as an adult) and a student's real possibilities. Taking as a starting point the specific of counselling process and stages of human development, the research aims to identify the interests and needs of students, in order to meet and assist them in their psychological and professional development, through counselling and psycho-pedagogical methods.

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1. Introduction

This paper proposes a detailed study on the student's psychology, the aim being to identify their psychological necessities and useful latent resources, for a harmonious development. Target group for this research were the typically students. At this stage of age, people take first steps towards socio-professional life, but often they found themselves being unprepared for it. On the other hand, the college stage that moves from adolescence to young adult, can be viewed as a period of existential crisis in the context of human development [1].

This time of crisis underlines the absence of direction and lack of psychological adaptation, which implies the presence of psycho-pedagogical support or a counselor that can be seen as a bridge between young students and society. Another reason for this study was to report the importance of detailed researches for these theme, and category of people, the studies on this field being quite rare.

Furthermore, this paper can be seen as a point of orientation in developing directions for counseling and specific counseling techniques needed to meet the interests and needs of students, such as trainings, workshops and various psychological programs. Psychological counselling in university environment, is starting from the point

where it comes to continue the educational learning process, for the student can start alone, on a road that it forms, helping him in time to find his social status, involved through role and position [2].

1.1. Methodological approach

Lot of research included 106 psychology students, aged 19-21 years, boys and girls in unequally report, which showed their desire to take part in this study. To measure self-image integration were used Rotter Scale (Locus of Control Scale). Identification and classification of needs and interest areas were made by collecting, analyzing and grouping their free responses to the question "for you, which is a major point of interest in this lifetime?" Scientific interpretation of data, charts and graphs were performed with statistical analysis software SPSS 18.

For this paper it was used the Rotter's Locus of Control scale, which refers to the general expectations of the individual with regard to the control of the subconscious. In other words, who or what is responsible for what is happening. This measurement scale of the control is referring at the expectations about the future, the theory that underlies this scale being the expectancies theory [3]. More precisely, this theory argues that, if an individual valorise a result of his actions and thinks that by a certain actional strategy will achieve the desired results, then it is very likely that they adopt these strategies.

Individuals with a strong internal control tend to consider that the events are influenced by their own behaviors or actions. People with external high score, are thinking that responsible for what is happening to them is ruled by chance, luck or other influential people. People with a high internal score, have the ability to control much better their personal behavior, thoughts and actions, believing that their efforts will be rewarded. They are more interested in finding out information about their own person, than people with localized external control are doing.

Beside the Rotter's scale, subjects had to traverse a questionnaire formulated to identify the attitude towards different dimensions of life, for which that would need the assistance of a counselor.

The study counted two important stages. In the first stage of working process, the research group counted 106 students and the main activity was to investigate the specific counseling needs at students, meaning their major life interests and needs. The second stage of the study was centered on a number of 86 subjects, methods used being the Rotter's scale and an applied questionnaire that resulted from the first stage of the study. Spss program for descriptive statistics was used, with the purpose for a statistical analysis that will highlight the number of people who exhibit the internal and external locus of control, from the total number of the second studied lot.

During this research, students were provoked to reach an highly emotional level, through an unusual and unnoticed activity, for not offering the possibility of providing answers enabling or untrue. Also, the manner of questionnaires/interviewing method in that formula, was very likely to have created a positive psychological shock, in the sense of attention of students for finding some new answers about themselves, the process of questioning being addressed somehow in a very direct way, acting as a powerful psychological stimulant.

By the concrete experience of raising information for this research, it was clearly distinguished a low level of self-awareness at participants and more, the absence of according an amount of time just to ask themselves questions regarding what they need or feel. These are some facts that are underlined by this paper: the need for implementing in state educational institutions or private, as well as in the specialised centres, a strategic psycho-educational plan for student, to help them focus on the importance of Self-discovering and personal development.

1.2. Results

The results of this study have shown low levels of identifying the personal needs at students. Going on the already known idea that, it's the cause of a problem that should be treated not the effects, this work had tried to identify the level of recognition and assumption of needs at students, to identify major areas of existential interest, as well as their ability to identify the best manner for behavioural responses.

While performing the asked task, there were lots of psychological blocks at students, certain subjects having a really difficult time to give an answer about their needs. At the opposite side were those who performed the task in a very short time, quickly identifying and recognizing areas of life where they felt they needed help. From their total responses, four categories of interest were revealed:

- Romantic couple
- Relationships with family / colleagues / friends
- Self-knowledge (identity, needs, needs, resources)
- Needs for a professional / vocational support

Each life-presented dimension contains age-specific needs for students, but each of them enjoys a variable interest. For example, all students are having a romantic life, but not for all, it's the most important existential area. The need for self-knowledge was by far the most common dimension where the students need support, meaning that despite biological development, building self esteem and the image of an "I", it appears to be a difficult process. Right after the interest on their psychological identity, was recorded at students, the need for a professional identity. Contrary to the fact that at that time they chose a particular academic specialization, the image of the vocational future, was found to be in a vague form, and that may mean that students need support in finding an appropriate professional path. Early career choice is made under impulses received from outside or from the need of meeting the expectations of the others, which may provide an explanation for the cognitive ambiguity that students appear to have on their professional careers. Relationships with the family and the romantic couple were next on the list of interest during prolonged adolescence.

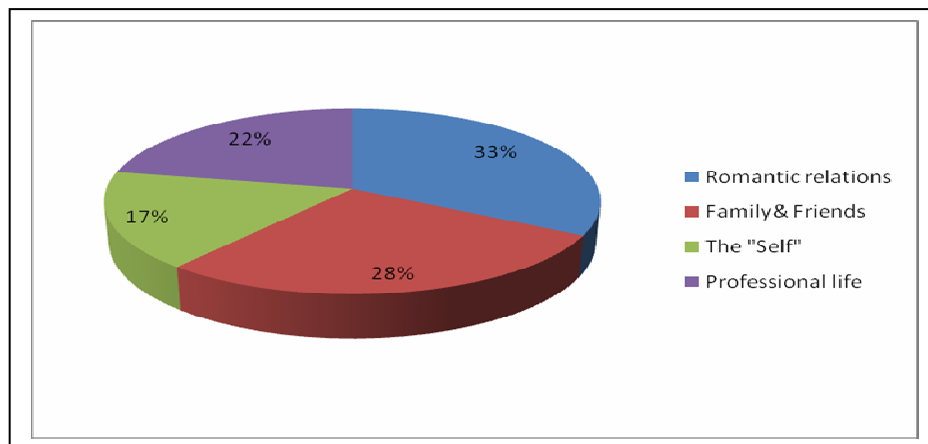


Fig. 1. The interest in existential areas at students

The chart above indicates a few ideas with great importance regarding the psychological universe of a student.

First, on a general level the most revealed need at students is to clarify their romantic couple life (33%). Finding the right partner and optimizing the love relationship, seems to be the main centre of interest at the majority of students participating at the study. Romantic relations are a powerful influencing life factor, at this age, getting love and appreciation from the opposite sex, is playing the role of confirmation of personal qualities. The free discussions held with most participants in the study, had led to the conclusions that failure in love correlates positively with school grades and/or social interaction. A stable relationship with a partner has the potential to give some balance and self-confidence, some of the attributes required for a strong Self.

Starting from the premise that love partner influence self-image and participates at creating the "I's", the couple imbalances can lead to deficient in the other activities or levels of living through the loss and tone of self-

confidence. In supporting the above ideas, sits the assertion according to which "the couple appears as an interpersonal creative way conducted simultaneously at a biological, psychological and social level" [4].

An immediately near percentage indicates the need of students for having support in understanding and managing the relationship with family and friends (28%), showing a growing interest for creating and maintaining social groups of belonging. Following the analysis and interpretation of graphs has spotlighted another aspect particularly prolonged adolescence age interests, namely the need for self-knowing and relationship management with itself (22%). The professional life, is the next stage of their social development (17%), professional size including needs for vocational information, counseling, guidance and directions to find the personal professional potential and preferences for specific professional domain.

Another central aspect was to identify the frequency in which students were found to be dominated by internal or external type, an important clue to the ability to assume responsibility on events, and the degree of internalization of their self-image. Basically, these details could lead to a better understanding of the existent discrepancy between what society thinks about students and their actual level.

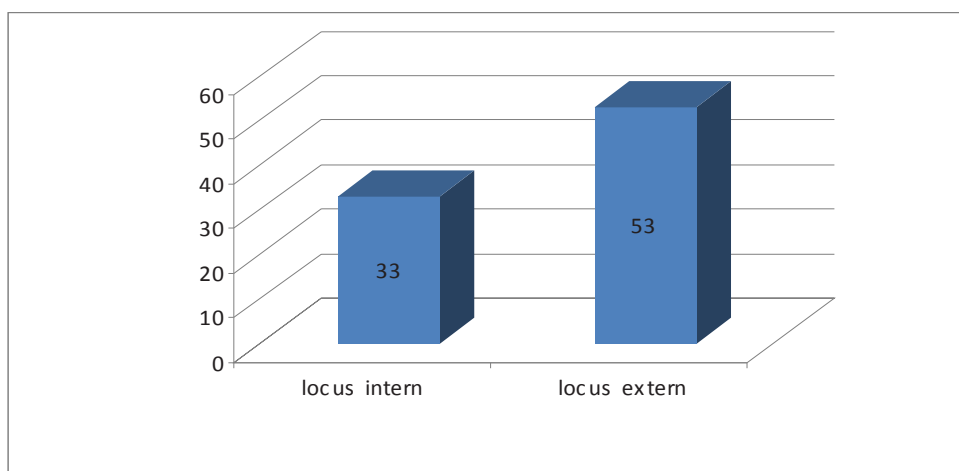


Fig. 2 Internal Locus type vs External Locus type

Results achieved had shown that 33 people of total are significantly assuming both negative and positive aspects of their life while taking responsibility over the results of their activity. In a almost double proportion, 53 students believed that personal influence in life events is pretty insignificant, at the expense of external factors (chance, luck, more powerful/influential person). A significant number of students characterized by external locus indicates that itself identity is quite low, have no consciousness of their own resources, hence the lack of self-confidence and not assuming the responsibility or the consequences of their actions..

Most students participating at the research were best described by the external type, believing that events in their lives depend on luck, fate or influential people. Significantly less, those with internal locus show the ability to recognize and assume personal involvement in activity, can handle a failure, being aware of self and how they may affect the results of activities. Depending on internal or external type, there have been defined some preferred existential areas for which they might need help to balance.

Internal type were interested for self-knowledge and future professional life.

External type, were focused on love relations, and needs related to family and friends.

The number of subjects participating at the research is significant, so the study's results could be generalized to the entire student community.

1.3. Discussion

The importance of the need for a good program of psycho-educational, that could provide intervention and prevention, is suggested by the results of the students interests. Studies and practice has shown that it's preferred to know yourself first, before starting to understand others, but this study's results have indicated that students are often concentrated on the others than on themselves.

In the absence of a specialized guide, psychological counseling and support, students find it difficult to center on themselves, choosing to disperse attention and energy in the outside rather than to itself. The concept of "Self" includes several variables [5]:

- Self control (self contained) the way which people controls their behaviors and reactions so far as fail to do;
- Self monitoring, in relation to others, individual is centered on self, expresses the thoughts, attitudes, feelings;
- Self-efficacy, the evaluation about own abilities, capacities and reaching specific goals, dealing with obstacles;
- Self-improvement, the desire to reach the desired self;
- Self-verification, by finding the persons that confirms the image of personal self;
- Self-awareness, suppose a detached analytical overview;
- The mental scheme, referring to specific aspects of the person's personality that are automatised in actions;
- Self-focusing, the degree in which persons are focusing on themselves;

This paper presents original details regarding the needs and interests at students. Further researches are required to implement proper and concrete psycho-educational programs, in order to support them to a harmonious development as future adults, the basis of a healthy society.

Conclusions

Optimizing the psychological level can be done by pursuing the objectives of the counseling process, that are: the promotion of well being and health, personal development and prevention.[4]. At university level the counseling activities were introduced mainly at the faculties with psychological profile, sociological, pedagogical or social assistance. The Centres for counselling and life orientation, The Institute of Social Sciences, the Professional orientation support centres, state or private ones, all these are starting to give some attention to scholar psycho-pedagogical, educational or even professional support. With all these, the scientific studies regarding psycho-educational support given to students it's still at it's beginning, although there are described lots of proper manners of specific interventions for individual or a group of students [9].

Still, there should not be forgotten that success of a counselling process is given by the client possibility of not remaining attached by his counsel, he should start learning his own way of dealing with problems or difficult existential periods, to be objective are guarding to itself, to be psychologically independent. A healthy person should be capable to assume responsibility, to give his own solutions to moments of crisis, avoiding repeating his mistakes. In case of failure, he should have the capacity to re-motivate himself, using his own capacities not waiting all the time for someone to guide him or give him the right answers [10].

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